



The Shorthorn Bull, Village Inghram, property of W. Hay, Tara, Ont.

## About the West

### The Grain Blockade—Live Stock Matters—The Barr Colony

There have been troubles for the railway management during these past few weeks. That unfortunate condition of affairs, commonly described as "grain shortage" and "wheat blockade" has been altogether too common. Up to the hard freeze of Nov 15th the farmers were so busily engaged in plowing and other preparations for winter that they gave little attention to marketing. The grain came in slowly and both the elevators and the railways were easily able to handle all that offered. In fact they were somewhat inclined to denounce the farmer for holding back his grain. They believed he was waiting for a further rise in the present excellent price, and called him bad names; they insinuated that he was a wicked, wicked speculator, a gambler in fact. Every honest farmer sells his wheat as soon as possible, was the recurrent of their remarks. Whether or no, the farmer has a right to hold his wheat for better prices is a question upon which every grain dealer is welcome to his own opinion. In the present instance, however, for one farmer who is holding for a rise, ten were holding for snow. This is proven by the sudden increase in market receipts with the advent of sleighing, which increase has been beyond the capacity of the elevators and railways to handle, causing the car shortage mentioned, at many points in the province.

We have always believed that as the grain trade increases in volume it will be recognized that marketing must be carried on throughout the year, and that to expect the railways to transport in three months the whole year's produce is not reasonable. We have held that the railways were making reasonably effective efforts to keep pace with the traffic and that too much hard language was wasted upon them. But this (even if admitted, which it is not by most Westerners) does not justify the claims persistently made by the management in the face of facts, that there is no blockade and no car shortage. We have the spectacle of public letters written by reputable men over their own names claiming that cars are not available to ship their grain, being given the direct lie by the officials of the company. Whether the farmer who has grain to ship, or the railway official who would like to make a profit by shipping, is the more believable, we cannot say, but all will regret that either should place himself in the unenviable position mentioned.

It is undeniable that at many points there have not been sufficient cars available to ship the grain offered during the past ten days.

Sir William Van Horne recently visited his farm at East Selkirk, Man., and inspected the improvements and additions lately made to his herd; there, which are understood to include some of the finest pure-bred stock ever brought into the province. A number of these were secured from the estate of the late Senator Cochrane.

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The Tri-State Grain Growers and Stock Raisers' Association meets at Fargo, N. D., January 19-22 inclusive. This is a very important gathering, when there will be present the most representative farmers of North and South Dakota and Minnesota. Mr. G. A. Johnson, for eight years mayor of Fargo, and the president of the Association, has been in Winnipeg recently for the purpose of meeting some of our stockmen and interesting them in the event. A feature of the convention will be the sale of live stock and seed grain. It is understood that "exchange" will be a feature of the sale, and stockmen desiring new blood for their herds will thus be mutually accommodated. Addresses are to be given by prominent agriculturists, professors, and government specialists.

An interesting budget of news has just reached me from Britannia Colony, as the Barr Settlement is now known. This colony is now under the direction

or leadership of Rev. G. E. Lloyd, whose popularity is well shown by the fact that the town which forms the centre of the colony has been named Lloydminster. However, popularity does not form a defence against all annoyances, for a libel action was recently entered against him by one of the colonists, by name Ramsbottom. When the matter came on trial, Mr. Ramsbottom's proofs were lacking and the case was dismissed much to the joy of the community.

Affairs in the colony are in much better condition than might be expected. Considerable amount of money has been placed in circulation by the C. N. Railway, whose contractors have given employment to every available man from the Colony during the fall. The Dominion Government is also spending a considerable amount in the erection of buildings and this has helped to keep the Colonists in funds. The Government has appointed a resident immigration agent, and this partly seems to divide with Rev. Mr. Lloyd the actual authority in the colony. Among other incidents indicative of his position, my correspondent remarks that one of the colonists, having departed this life, all arrangements for the funeral were made by the government representative. All goods for the colony are teamed from Saskatoon, and some idea of the magnitude of this undertaking may be gained from the fact that there are eighteen teams constantly engaged in this work, hauling an average load of a ton and three-quarters. Building operations are going steadily forward and though a large number of the colonists will have to occupy their tents throughout the winter, the number of these is steadily diminishing.

### Manitoba Crops

On Dec. 10 the final crop bulletin of the Manitoba Department of Agriculture was issued, giving the actual yield of the various kinds of grain for 1903. The total area in wheat was 2,442,873 acres and the average yield 16.4 bushels, giving a total yield of 40,116,838 bushels. Oats yielded 38.6, barley 26.6, and peas 21.4 bushels per acre. The total grain yield for the province was 82,576,519 bushels as compared with 100,054,343 bushels in 1902. Owing to the increased breaking, summer fallowing and fall plowing, it is estimated that fully 3,000,000 acres will be sown to wheat next year in Manitoba alone.

Fuller particulars regarding this report are crowded out of this issue. They will appear in next issue.



Shorthorn Cow owned by Neil Dow, Tara, Ont.